

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 06298 252 3

Nº \* 6345.55

V. I

1801-57



*Bought with the  
Abram E. Cutter Fund*





ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
CITY OF CHARLESTOWN.

DECEMBER, 1851.



---

CHARLESTOWN:  
PRINTED BY CALEB RAND.  
1851.



The School Committee of Charlestown, in compliance with a law of the Commonwealth, submit the following

## ANNUAL REPORT.

---

At the commencement of the present year, the Board presented to the City Council their estimate of the amount of appropriation that would be needed in order to carry on the Public Schools as they were then organized, and this amount (\$25,000) was granted. Later in the season, it was found that additional accommodations were requisite for several of the Primary Schools, and appropriations for these, also, were granted. Thus there has been harmony of action between the School Committee and the City Council, and this has not been without a favorable influence on the schools.

No changes have been made in the organization of the Schools during the year. A School has been established at the Poor House for the children there, which has been well attended, and has made satisfactory progress; and a Primary School has been established on Bunker-Hill, which is already overflowing with pupils. An addition of force, consisting of female assistant teachers, has been put into the Grammar Schools. The school room provided in the Ward House of Ward Three, has been enlarged for the accommodation of Primary School Number Three,—though the policy

of uniting School Rooms, Ward Rooms and Engine Houses is very questionable. These comprise the chief changes that have been made during the year.

There are now three grades of Schools, the Primary Schools, the Grammar Schools, and the High School. These are under the charge of ten male teachers and forty-seven female teachers. At the close of the October term, there were 1911 pupils in the twenty-seven Primary Schools, being 153 more than there were at the close of the same term last year; 1222 pupils in the eight Grammar Schools, 15 more than last year; and 76 in the High School, 10 less than last year. The total number of scholars in the Schools in October, 1850, was 3050; in 1851, was 3209; increase, 158. The population of the city is about sixteen thousand—consequently one-fifth of it is composed of the pupils of the Schools. The total sum raised by taxation this year was \$81,775 00; of this, \$25,000 was raised for the support of public Schools; to which is to be added the sum received from the Commonwealth, the City's proportion of the School fund, \$660; add the amount expended for additional accommodations of the Primary Schools, \$1000, and other repairs, and it will make the total expense of this department of the government not much short of \$27,000. The annual appropriation for next year will be required to be somewhat larger, as another Primary School is urgently demanded at the Point, and some of the Schools in other parts of the City, are too much crowded.

## PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

The following table contains the statistics of the Primary Schools at the close of the Winter Term and the Summer Term:



No. of Schools.	Primary Schools.	Location of Schools.	Whole No. Winter Term.	Boys.	Girls.	Close of Winter Term.	Boys.	Girls.	Average attendance.	Present at Examination.	No. of visits of Sub-Committee.
Teachers' Names.											
1	Mary J. Brown	Near B. H. School House,	114	61	53	90	49	41	60	61	17
2	Malvina B. Skilton	Mead Street,	104	49	55	82	39	43	56	72	8
3	Hannah H. Sampson	Rear of 187 Main street,	102	48	54	83	39	44	55	66	11
4	Charlotte M. Moore	Warren School House,	72	46	26	62	41	21	50	55	31
5	Maria H. Farnsworth	Elm street,	66	37	29	59	36	23	44	53	11
6	Rebecca Ames	Elm street,	110	60	50	72	40	32	50	56	
7	Susan L. Sawyer	Main street, rear of 187,	87	40	47	71	32	39	53	64	10
8	J. M. Ranstead	Bartlett street,	75	42	33	58	33	25	46	48	27
9	S. E. Woodbridge	Bartlett street,	62	30	32	60	20	31	46	52	34
10	Elizabeth Eames	Common street,	61	35	26	55	30	25	46	53	7
11	Joanna S. Putnam	Common street,	90	43	47	79	37	42	60	72	10
12	Catherine D. Flint	Bow street,	71	37	34	56	30	26	38	49	10
13	M. E. Lincoln	Bow street,	99	48	51	76	37	39	46	63	10
14	Sarah E. Smith	Bow street,	94	43	51	72	30	42	65	60	12
15	Jane E. Rugg	Bow street,	86	40	46	66	27	39	52	58	4
16	Abby E. Hinckley	Common street,	86	46	40	76	39	37	52	65	8
17	Emily S. Fernald	Bunker-Hill st., at Point,	112	56	56	91	42	49	62	82	
18	Ellenora Butts	Bunker-Hill st., at Point,	158	76	82	81	40	41	52	52	18
19	Louisa W. Huntress	Moulton street,	96	48	48	79	38	41	59	58	5
20	Elizabeth C. Hunting	Winthrop street,	74	33	41	65	29	35	42	43	9
21	Louise P. Hunting	Bartlett street,	80	48	32	70	41	29	52	41	12
22	Frances M. Lane	Bartlett street,	116	49	67	100	45	55	47	50	15
23	M. A. Osgood	Haverhill street,	64	34	30	59	34	25	37	39	9
24	C. M. Chamberlain	Common street,	59	35	24	56	32	24	41	46	10
25	Henrietta M. Sanborn	Ward Room of Ward 2,	85	47	38	73	43	30	43	53	5
			2223	1131	1092	1792	913	879	1252	1417	

No. of Schools.	Primary Schools.	Whole Number Summer Term.	Boys.	Girls.	Number at close of Term.	Boys.	Girls.	Average Attendance.	Present at Examination.	No. of visits of Sub-Committee.	Names of Sub-Committee.
Teachers' Names.											
1	Mary J. Brown	121	64	57	65	34	31	55	57	12	Charles D. Lincoln
2	Malvina B. Skilton	118	64	54	79	40	39	59	71	9	Charles B. Rogers
3	Hannah H. Sampson	108	52	66	79	38	41	53	68	8	" "
4	Charlotte M. Moore	80	46	34	66	37	29	57	58	12	Andrew K. Hunt
5	Mary J. Chandler	81	47	34	55	30	25	43	50	19	" "
6	M. L. Everett	110	68	42	73	45	28	56	67	23	E. P. Mackintire
7	Susan L. Sawyer	113	57	56	83	38	45	56	78	9	" "
8	J. M. Ranstead	75	43	32	57	26	31	42	44	22	C. W. Moore
9	S. E. Woodbridge	99	41	58	68	29	39	54	55	25	" "
10	Elizabeth Eames	76	38	38	63	37	26	45	50	5	J. G. Fuller
11	Joanna S. Putnam	95	44	51	75	34	41	58	67	5	" "
12	Catherine D. Flint	84	42	42	64	35	29	42	55	8	William Tufts
13	M. E. Lincoln	90	40	50	62	30	32	49	50	4	S. J. Thomas
14	Sarah E. Smith	119	54	65	90	38	52	56	76	7	William Tufts
15	Jane E. Rugg	88	48	40	68	34	34	52	58	6	S. J. Thomas
16	Abby E. Hinckley	108	53	55	80	37	43	58	65	3	James Adams
17	Emily S. Fernald	136	71	65	82	38	44	67	70	5	William Sawyer
18	Ellenora Butts	113	66	47	95	42	53	56	77	7	" "
19	Louisa W. Huntress	133	67	66	85	43	42	63	72	6	Edward Thorndike
20	Elizabeth C. Hunting	75	36	39	66	31	35	37	47	4	James G. Fuller
21	Louise P. Hunting	78	43	35	67	34	33	58	57	8	John Sanborn
22	Frances M. Lane	127	59	68	78	40	38	70	66	8	" "
23	M. A. Osgood	75	40	35	60	31	29	39	47	3	C. D. Lincoln
24	C. A. Chamberlain	60	33	27	53	29	24	39	46	4	James Adams
25	Henrietta M. Sanborn	119	65	54	85	45	40	42	34	8	Edw'd Thorndike
26	Charlotte Poole	49	30	19	32	21	11	25	35	11	E. P. Mackintire
27	Louisa A. Pratt	87	36	51	81	35	46	58	70	3	James Adams
		2597	1317	1230	1911	951	960	1389	1590	248	

The reports of the Sub-Committees on these Schools represent them generally to be in a satisfactory condition. They indicate an easy government, an eager interest on the part of the pupils, a good degree of progress in the few and simple studies that are required, and a commendable interest in them by parents. Still there is considerable difference in the management and condition of the Schools. Some of the teachers do far more to promote the education of pupils than others do, and this by teaching in an accurate and thorough manner. The most important of the studies and exercises in these are those connected with reading; and if teachers learn the scholars to articulate well, to practice the elementary sounds correctly, and to read without contracting a school tone, which is so hard to overcome, they do an important and lasting work. But to do this it is necessary, that they should have given study to the subject. Have all those who have the charge of these interesting Schools thus thoroughly prepared themselves? There are twenty-seven teachers daily training the voices of some two thousand pupils, and the Committee expect to see in the manner of reading, the evidence that the teachers have given proper attention to the study of elocution.

## GRAMMAR SCHOOLS.

The following table comprises the statistics of the High and Grammar Schools:

# SCHOOL RETURNS,

AT THE SEMI-ANNUAL EXAMINATION.

## HIGH AND GRAMMAR SCHOOLS.

SCHOOL RETURNS,	
AT THE SEMI-ANNUAL EXAMINATION.	
HIGH AND GRAMMAR SCHOOLS.	
High School, Bunker-Hill, " Warren, " Winthrop, " Harvard, "	No. 1. No. 1. No. 2. No. 1. No. 2. No. 1. No. 2. No. 1. No. 2.

Term ending April 30th, 1851.	
Whole Number of Scholars for the Term.	83
Boys.	36
Girls.	47
Number at its close.	64
Boys.	22
Girls.	41
Average Attendance.	62
Present at Examination.	64
Number of visits of School Committee.	31
Whole Number of Scholars for the Term.	86
Boys.	40
Girls.	46
Number at its close.	77
Boys.	35
Girls.	42
Average Attendance.	95
Present at Examination.	74
Number of visits of School Committee.	26

Term Ending October 31st, 1851.	
Whole Number of Scholars for the Term.	135
Boys.	64
Girls.	71
Number at its close.	108
Boys.	55
Girls.	53
Average Attendance.	93
Present at Examination.	59
Number of visits of School Committee.	19
Whole Number of Scholars for the Term.	152
Boys.	78
Girls.	74
Number at its close.	128
Boys.	65
Girls.	63
Average Attendance.	92
Present at Examination.	105
Number of visits of School Committee.	21
Whole Number of Scholars for the Term.	192
Boys.	100
Girls.	92
Number at its close.	149
Boys.	81
Girls.	68
Average Attendance.	137
Present at Examination.	135
Number of visits of School Committee.	53
Whole Number of Scholars for the Term.	200
Boys.	105
Girls.	95
Number at its close.	164
Boys.	84
Girls.	80
Average Attendance.	135
Present at Examination.	136
Number of visits of School Committee.	34
Whole Number of Scholars for the Term.	232
Boys.	115
Girls.	117
Number at its close.	179
Boys.	96
Girls.	83
Average Attendance.	147
Present at Examination.	164
Number of visits of School Committee.	36
Whole Number of Scholars for the Term.	242
Boys.	139
Girls.	103
Number at its close.	163
Boys.	97
Girls.	66
Average Attendance.	145
Present at Examination.	144
Number of visits of School Committee.	23

## BUNKER-HILL SCHOOLS.

The Bunker-Hill School, number One, is under the charge of David Atwood, Principal, and Dorcas E. Farnsworth, Assistant. Number Two is under A. B. Saunders, Principal, and Sarah J. Knight, Assistant. The sub-committee are E. P. Mackintire, Charles B. Rogers and C. D. Lincoln.

In last year's Annual Report it was stated that these schools had been unfavorably affected by the changes that had been made in them. But the sub-committee of the present year feel justified in reporting that these unfavorable circumstances had mostly ceased to operate, and that these schools are now doing well. The April report represents, "that all the teachers had been diligent and faithful to their trust, and that the scholars had made good progress under their instructors." In October, the report is still more favorable. It states: "With one or two exceptions, all the classes in both schools appear well, thoroughly drilled, and familiar with the studies gone over during the last term." These exceptions were, chiefly, relating to the reading in the lower classes, where more force is needed, and to the general aspect of those classes which contained the greatest per cent. of absences where the difficulty was beyond the reach of the teachers. The report says: "The teachers in both schools, your committee think, are competent and faithful, and with the exceptions specified, they are happy to report them both in good condition." Additional force will be required in these schools, and more particularly in number Two, the next year.

## WARREN SCHOOLS.

Warren School, number One, is under the charge of George Swan, Principal, and Miss M. M. Hays, Elizabeth Upton, and Emily M. Moulton, Assistants. Number Two is under the charge of Joseph T. Swan, Principal; Sarah T. Chandler, Elizabeth Williams, and Mary R. Mayhew, Assistants. The sub-committee are Charles W. Moore, Andrew K. Hunt, and John Sanborn.

The Sub-Committee, in October, reported these schools to be in excellent condition, "accomplishing all that may reasonably be expected, and they entertain no doubt that they will maintain their high standing and character under their present able and competent principals." They remark: "Since the admissions from the Primaries, these Schools are filled to depletion. There are more scholars than can be seated in number Two, and almost every seat is occupied in number One." "As a whole, they are very satisfactory. We do not say there might not be some changes which might be beneficial. We do not say that the teachers are models in every respect. We do not expect to find perfection. But we are opposed to change; and unless stronger reasons than now exist, are apparent, we see no cause for any."

## WINTHROP SCHOOLS.

Winthrop School, number One, is under the charge of Luther W. Anderson, Principal; Sarah E. Russell, Rebecca S. Richardson and Anna Delano, Assistants. Number Two, Samuel S. Willson, Principal; Julia A. Bridge, Anna M. Gregory, Ellen A. Richardson, Assistants. The Sub-Committee are James G. Fuller, Edward Thorndike and William Sawyer.

The Sub-Committee on these schools, at the April examination, reported that number One was in a condition entirely satisfactory—the teachers evincing great faithfulness, and the scholars great interest in their studies. Number Two had been large during the term, and the divisions under the Assistants had been much of the time crowded, "preventing that progress, which, under other circumstances, might have been looked for." At the October examination, these Schools appeared, mainly, in a good condition, the recitations being prompt, and the teaching thorough. "There existed," says the report, "through the term, the utmost harmony among the teachers, and between the teachers and parents."



## HARVARD SCHOOLS.

Harvard School number One is under the charge of C. S. Cartee, Principal, and Anna O. Robbins, Sarah J. Stockman, S. F. Kittredge, Assistants. Number Two, Joseph B. Morse, Principal; Rebecca Drake, Adeline M. West, and Adeline E. Clapp, Assistants. The Sub-Committee are Seth J. Thomas, James Adams, and William Tufts.

The report of the Sub-Committee, after the examination in April, stated, that number One was in an unsatisfactory condition; "which was attributable to insufficiency in the number of teachers, and also to the repeated change of teachers during the previous year." The Board put more force into the School, and the same Sub-Committee, after the October examination, reported that this School had much improved—the order being good and the recitations generally being satisfactory, while many of them were of a high order. The condition of number Two has long been satisfactory to the Board, and the October report states that the School maintained its previous reputation, the order being excellent, the teachers faithful and zealous, and the School generally in good condition.

## GENERAL REMARKS.

These representations of the condition of the Grammar Schools, were made after patient and thorough examinations by the several Sub-Committees who have had charge of them. They unite in the gratifying fact, that the unfavorable influence of the recent changes in their organization had ceased to operate, while the additional force of assistant teachers which the committee put in at the commencement of the year, had been attended with beneficial results. They have improved, and are now doing well. Their importance can hardly be overrated; for all the children attend them, and in too many instances, owing to causes beyond the control of the committee or the teachers, and often even by parents and guardians, they furnish all the school advantages which

the majority of children enjoy. Every means, therefore, should be taken to keep them at as high a standard as it is practicable, to multiply their attractions, and to present all proper inducements for children to attend them; and it is to be hoped that they never will be allowed to become tame and spiritless. Much time and attention have been given to them during the past year, and so encouraging are the representations of the Sub-Committees as to them all, that the apprehensions entertained at the date of the last annual report, as to the decline of some of them, no longer exist; but, on the contrary, the committee feel warranted in giving the assurance that by judicious management, proper encouragement and patient perseverance, they will accomplish all that ought to be expected of them.

## HIGH SCHOOL.

The High School is under the charge of A. M. Gay, Principal; Charles F. McDonald, Sub-master; Mrs. P. G. Bates, Assistant. The Sub-Committee are Charles W. Moore, William Sawyer, Seth J. Thomas and Eliab P. Mackintire.

This School is organized in three divisions, called the senior, middle and junior classes. During the last term, the senior class of twelve girls was chiefly engaged in the study of Latin (Virgil,) Zoology, Chemistry, Drawing, and the French language; the middle class of fourteen girls and eight boys, of Latin (Cæsar,) Natural Philosophy, Geometry, and Rhetoric; the junior class, of seventeen girls and twenty boys, of Latin (first lessons,) Algebra and Modern History. A class of four boys studied Greek. The other branches attended to were Composition, Orthography, Vocal culture, Declamation and Book-keeping. Weekly lectures were given by the teachers in Chemistry and Natural Philosophy. The same course of study, substantially, was pursued during the term ending in April. At the conclusion of both terms, the Sub-Committee made thorough examinations of the classes, reviewing the ground they had been over, and reported their

condition in detail to the Board. Of one or two classes, owing to circumstances for which the teachers were not responsible, the report was not favorable; but of most of the classes, both reports speak in the most gratifying manner. They gave evidence of thorough training and marked improvement.

Of the class of fifteen pupils who graduated last April, the Sub-Committee report as follows: "It is detracting nothing from the merits of similar institutions, to say, that in the opinion of your Committee, the members of it have left the School better, more thorough, and accomplished scholars, than any class of young ladies and gentlemen who have ever before graduated within the limits of Charlestown. They have left it fitted, so far as elementary education and high moral discipline can fit them, for all the active duties of life, qualified to become intelligent and useful men and women, an honor to themselves and to the community through whose munificence they have received the highest blessing it is in the power of any community to bestow upon its sons and daughters."

During the past year the capacity of this school for usefulness has been much increased. The Board appropriated a liberal sum for the purchase of chemical apparatus; a handsome subscription by the friends of the School of eight hundred and ninety dollars, has supplied it with a well selected library, composed almost entirely of standard works in literature and science; a suitable place has been provided for the books, and the pupils have supplied a printed catalogue; a large collection of specimens of the plants of Western Europe, has been presented to it by the Principal of the school, and a collection of specimens of the plants of Massachusetts has been presented by the young ladies of the school; and the pupils, with others, have made a small collection of specimens for the study of Conchology. While these offerings indicate the sympathy and interest felt in this school, they will serve to render it more attractive; and if judiciously used, they will add to its efficiency and permanency.



With such means at hand—with the encouragement of a cheering public opinion—with competent and faithful teachers, and a vigilant supervision—nothing seems to be in the way of the success of this institution. The design is to gather, by the most impartial method, capable and deserving pupils from the Grammar Schools, and give them opportunities for mental culture, which certainly it is not practicable for the Grammar Schools to afford; and it is the aim of the Committee, in doing this, to provide, in addition to the more obtruse branches of study, the means to obtain such an English education as shall fit these pupils for the active duties of life. But after all, the community, in whatever effort it may make, can only supply its youth with opportunities and encouragement: for true education consists in mental discipline, which must be the work of the pupils themselves, and can only come by steady, patient labor. It is only this that will educate them, or develop their intellectual powers; and it is the teachers' highest recommendation, to call forth such labor. The test of success in this must be ability on the part of the scholars, to perform intellectual efforts; and only as they exhibit this ability in the problems, or exercises, or themes which they think out themselves, will they show that they attain to that degree of mental discipline to which it is the object of the institution to carry them.

The Committee believe that the High School is quietly, but efficiently doing its appropriate work, and gradually attaining a high rank. The teachers are devoted to their labors, and are capable of imparting the requisite instruction; the fine order in it is maintained without difficulty; the scholars evince an eager interest in their studies, and a proper appreciation of the value of their privileges; and its means of usefulness are multiplying. Hence there is no reason why this institution should not furnish all the advantages of a well-appointed academy; and in proportion as it attains and maintains this character, will it be a benefit to the other schools, and a blessing and an ornament to our city.

## GENERAL REMARKS.

The reports of the several Sub-Committees, warrant the opinion that our Schools are steadily improving and will compare favorably, in each of their grades, with other public Schools. Still there are evils connected with them which the Committee would gladly see done away. One of them is the number of absences. It is neither just to the teachers nor scholars to affirm that truancy prevails to any great extent, though in all the Schools cases may exist, and in some to a greater extent than in others; but frivolous excuses often keep children away. The Sub-Committee on the Harvard School, remark, "There is an evil prevalent not only in these Schools but in all the Schools of our city, which to a great degree prevents a large portion of the pupils attending them from receiving that advantage which they ought to receive, and also prevents the others from making that progress which under other circumstances they would attain: we refer to the great amount of tardiness and absence of the pupils, and generally with the full or partial knowledge and consent of their parents; if this evil were in all cases the consequence of poverty where the older child is employed in caring for the younger, while the mother is earning their daily bread, it would be a matter of regret, but not of censure; but such is not usually the case: probably three-fourths of this evil comes from families comfortably situated, and from whom the most frivolous excuses are received for the tardiness or absence of their children. We deem this to be the greatest obstacle to the full success of our glorious free school system, inasmuch as it is practiced by so large a portion of the pupils, while truancy in most of our Schools is of much more rare occurrence." And the remedy suggested is not harsh measures, but patient efforts on the part of the Committee to multiply the inducements for children to attend the Schools, or to make them more attractive.

The number of vagrant boys who attend no School, is a growing evil in our large cities; and there is too much rea-

son to believe that the number is large in this city. It is surprising that some parents do not exert themselves to secure a more constant attendance of their children at School: it is more surprising that our priceless School advantages, offered so freely to all, should be utterly neglected by so many. The lamentable consequences of such neglect are self-evident, and need not be dwelt upon. Hence this evil has lately received much attention from the friends of education; and one result has been that the Legislature passed a stringent act in 1850, relating to truants and vagrants, which may be in force in any city or town that votes to adopt it. This Committee, in an elaborate report, recommended that it be put in force in this city, and the City Council accepted this act in an Ordinance, which is a transcript of the Boston Ordinance, accepting the same law. The statute requires that the city or town by-law be approved by a court before it can take effect; but the same court that approved the Boston Ordinance refused to approve the Charlestown Ordinance, and hence the law is not in force here. The subject, in all its bearings is important, and deserves the renewed attention of future Committees.

The subject of discipline is the most difficult and delicate with which the Committee have to deal; and as often as it has been remarked upon, there is still need of a proper consideration of it by parents. Though the order of the Schools is generally maintained rather by kind words than by heavy blows, yet there have been cases during the last year, where the Committee have been obliged to meet parents, which were exceedingly unpleasant and trying. The Sub-Committee on the High School remark, "The scholars and the teachers in all our public Schools, require the counsel, encouragement, and support of those under whose immediate authority they act, in order to interest all, in the proper discharge of their respective duties. If these are withheld, the scholars become listless; and the teachers, left alone to encounter the frivolous complaints of unreasonable parents, and the obduracy of still more unreasonable scholars, feel keenly and sensibly the absence of the supervisory power,

become discouraged, perhaps relax in their duties, and the School declines."

The Committee consider it to be unnecessary, so sound is public sentiment in this City on this great subject, to enlarge on the importance of a thorough system of public instruction, free alike from favoritism, sectarianism, or partizan influences, and wisely and faithfully fulfilling the obligations that society is under to provide ample opportunities for the moral and intellectual culture of its youth. To obtain this culture, it is far better to rely on the quiet, steady, persevering labors of teachers of skill and capacity, than to be continually trying what a new organization, or new text books,—or new studies of doubtful utility,—or some new, easy, and flattering method of study, might accomplish; and the present organization of the Schools and course of studies, are commended to the public, not as being perfect, not as being the best that experience elsewhere may have devised, but on the whole, as a system, that, under existing circumstances, it would be better to continue *here* for the present essentially as it is, than it would be to try the effect of radical alterations. The Board earnestly recommend this consideration to their successors. And when there appears to be a falling off in a class, a division, or a school, it may be well to make the searching inquiry whether it is not owing to fault in the teaching, rather than to the need of important change.

The Committee, on resigning their charge, commend our noble Schools to a generous public regard, and their teachers to the respect and confidence which their vocation deserves and demands. They are designed to do a great work; and it will ever be to the credit of this community, that, from the earliest period of its history, under the smiles of Providence, they have here had the fostering care of successive generations of men who were as zealous to discharge their duties, as they were to maintain their rights.

By order of the Committee,

RICHARD FROTHINGHAM, JR.	} Sub-Committee.
ELIAB P. MACKINTIRE,	
CHARLES D. LINCOLN,	

Charlestown, Dec. 1851.

# Report on Truancy.

—o—

CITY OF CHARLESTOWN,

IN THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

April 5, 1851.

—o—

THE undersigned, to whom was committed the subject of Truancy, with instructions to consider what means shall be taken for its remedy, have attended to the duty, and respectfully submit the following

## R E P O R T .

It is stated in the report of the School Committee for the past year, which report has been printed and generally circulated, that “ this evil (Truancy) seems to be increasing, and it must be evident to any one who is in the city during school hours, that many boys are in the streets who ought to be engaged in study—you may find scholars of this class in all the streets and lanes, on the wharves and bridges of the city—some engaged in fishing—some in sports—but more learning the first lessons in crime, and preparing to occupy the enlarged accommodations which are now in progress of erection by the State, in the westerly part of the city. It cannot be denied that the influence of these upon other scholars is decidedly injurious, and, while all



means should be, and we believe are used by our teachers to remedy this evil, they are entirely powerless,—the evil still exists, and while children are upheld in this course by their parents, and while there exists a disposition to consider the matter of trifling importance, the evil will not be remedied.”

It is a matter of regret that our large outlay of money in the construction of commodious school-rooms—the employment of well qualified teachers—the organization of numerous schools, constantly kept open and free to all, do not meet all the wants of our community, and that there should be so many children among us who do not participate in the advantages of these generous provisions. It is yet more to be regretted, that such children, growing up in ignorance and crime, should exercise so unhappy an influence upon those who do attend these schools. But most of all do we regret that there should exist in our community a feeling of popular indifference to these melancholy results.

It is expected, and it ought to be realized, that our schools should provide for every child the means of obtaining a good education, and thereby the rising generation be trained up in knowledge and virtue, and vice and crime essentially diminished. All are agreed that our system of popular education is the foundation on which to base our hopes of improvement. If then, we find, all around us, “in our streets and lanes, on our wharves and bridges,” children who ought to be in our school houses engaged in lessons of usefulness, instead of misspending their time and taking lessons in crime—

we cannot resist the conclusion that our work is not yet accomplished, and that much remains to be done.

We have no reason to doubt the extent of the evil of Truancy in this city, as it is above stated. We are obliged to admit it. It meets us on every side, and it is a matter of constant complaint. It is not, we think, peculiar to this city, but prevails wherever it is not made a matter for special action. Like other nuisances, it has been suffered ; and its baneful influences endured for want of some active movement which shall bring it prominently before the public mind. We are therefore strongly impressed with the necessity of diligent and persevering effort on the part of the School Committee, to awaken public attention to it.

In many cases there is sufficient parental feeling and regard, which may be called into action by timely hints from the proper sources. There are many fathers and mothers who, through indolence, negligence, or some other cause, are forgetful of their duties to their offspring. They suffer their children to live on in idleness, unmindful that such a course may be preparing many sorrows in the future, which they must share. Such need only to be apprised of their remissness ; and, with a healthy public feeling, would be likely to bear their duties in mind and faithfully perform them.

But there are other cases in which we find persons unworthy to sustain the parental relation—persons who have no regard for themselves nor their offspring ; and unfortunately in large cities this class is not small.—In these cases advice and caution avail nothing, entreaties are in vain, and the authority of law is abso-

lutely requisite to secure for their children the advantages of education. Such people forfeit the right of control of their offspring; and the safety of the community requires that it should be transferred to the civil authorities. It has been well remarked, that "a parent who sends his son into the world uneducated and without skill in any art or science, does a great injury to mankind, as well as to his own family, for he defrauds the community of a useful citizen and bequeaths to it a nuisance." Such parents have no right to inflict such injuries, and should be debarred the opportunity. In Prussia, it is a criminal offence for a parent, without satisfactory excuse, to neglect the education of his child for the time required by law; and upon conviction in court, a parent who does so is sentenced to *prison*, and his child taken from him and sent to *school*.

Recently the subject of compulsory attendance upon schools has been agitated in this State, and a law has been enacted concerning it. It gives authority to the several cities and towns to make all needful provisions and arrangements concerning habitual Truants, and children not attending school, who, without any regular and lawful occupation, are growing up in ignorance, between the ages of six and fifteen years; also, such ordinances and by-laws, respecting such children, as shall be deemed most conducive to their welfare and the good order of such city or town, and to annex to such ordinances suitable penalties, not exceeding for any one breach a fine of \$20. It is also made the duty of any city or town availing itself of the provisions of this law, to appoint, at the annual meeting of said town,



or annually by the mayor and aldermen of said city, three or more persons who alone shall be authorised to make the complaint in every case of violation of such ordinances or by-laws to a Justice of the Peace or other judicial officer, who, by said ordinances, shall have jurisdiction in the matter; and the persons thus appointed shall alone have authority to carry into execution the judgments of said Justices of the Peace or other judicial officer. By a further provision, "the said Justices of the Peace or other judicial officer shall in all cases at their discretion in place of the fine aforesaid be authorised to order children proved before them to be growing up in Truancy, and without the benefit of education provided for them by law, to be placed for such periods of time as they may judge expedient, in such institution for instruction, or house of reformation, or other suitable situation, as may be assigned or provided for the purpose by the city or town availing itself of the powers herein granted."

We think the authority is ample for our purpose, and if judiciously used will prove efficacious, and we recommend that measures be adopted requisite to put it in force in our city. We desire the establishment of an institution in which truants and juvenile delinquents may be kept and governed, and where suitable provision shall be made for their physical, moral, and intellectual culture. We feel very confident that such an institution is required; and if established will soon meet the approval of the public. We embrace this occasion to say, that we are better pleased with the plan of establishing some suitable institution of instruction

for those amenable to the laws we recommend, than with a system of penalties. We doubt if any good is accomplished by imposing a fine for Truancy. A parent so lost to a sense of duty, and so heedless of the care of his child, as to suffer him to incur a penalty, will hardly be restored by an appeal to his pocket—and, besides, in most cases, such parents are too poor to pay the fine. On the other hand, if the children of such are placed in some proper institution, their progress and improvement will be likely to excite an interest in their behalf, which will induce their parents to exert themselves to do something towards their support.

An objection might be made to the cost of such an establishment, but we do not think it will weigh much upon consideration. It costs now, no small amount to carry on an effective police to restrain juveniles, and a large amount is lost almost every day by persons who are unwilling to seek redress against mere children for petty crimes. It would be difficult to estimate all its advantages in money; but still we think they would far outweigh any outlay that can be made. The character of our city—its regard for its destitute and suffering children—its desire to make its schools as perfect as practicable—its good order—its success in rearing up useful citizens, who shall be a benefit to society, rather than paupers, rogues and idiots, to be a burthen to it, should all come into the calculation.

But the whole train of evils that inflict society may be traced to defects in early education, and if our city, or any other, neglects to provide for the wants of its youth, and suffers them to get such an education,

as the streets, the nine-pin alleys, and other places equally injurious afford, it will in the end produce nothing but disasters. Society, which claims the right to punish men, ought certainly to exercise the right of educating children. It is far more profitable and more pleasant to prevent crime than to punish it—and it needs no words from us to convince the reasonable, that every dollar expended in the prevention of evil, saves hundreds in controlling it.

In our remarks, thus far, we have referred to children who are neglected. But there is yet another class, for whom it seems proper that provision should be made. There are many children in this city who are kept from our public schools by poverty—some to provide by their labor, or by begging, for the support of themselves and their parents—others, because they have not sufficient or decent clothing. In all cases of this kind, it seems to us, the public should interpose. A proper regard for such children is undoubtedly the duty of the Board of Overseers of the Poor; but it seems appropriate that we should allude to them and recommend a more careful consideration of their wants. Without doubt, such consideration would bring many, who now suffer, within the good influences of our public schools.

We think, in addition to what we have already proposed, that this Board may do much good, by an effort to call public attention to the subject, in our community. If we can relieve ourselves from popular indifference, and get the public interested so as to assist us, we may accomplish much in freeing our streets from

idlers and truants. If parents will feel that duty to their own children requires them to have an interest in the children of others, so far as to set them in the right path when they find them astray, we shall soon see the faces of many turned towards the school room. A word spoken in season by the citizen who finds a boy or girl in the streets during school hours, may do much good. We recommend that the city officers and the clergymen of the city, who, by a law of the Commonwealth, are charged with this duty, be requested to use their endeavors by public addresses or otherwise to this end.

We also recommend that this Board adopt a vote requiring the Teachers, in connection with the Sub-Committees of their schools, to make monthly reports of all cases of Truancy known to them, stating the names of the children and their parents; also, of all cases where children are kept from school by poverty; and that such reports be presented to the Board in writing at their monthly meetings, and so much of said reports as may be proper, be published quarterly.

WILLIAM SAWYER,	}	COMMITTEE.
C. W. MOORE,		
WILLIAM TUFTS,		







